

## **MINUTES**

### **SUISUN RESOURCE CONSERVATION DISTRICT BOARD OF DIRECTOR'S MEETING**

HELD REMOTELY ON WEDNESDAY, MAY 12, 2021, AT 2:00 PM  
Zoom Video Teleconference Meeting

**DIRECTORS PRESENT:** Terry Connolly  
Arnold Lenk  
Mike Lewis  
Jim Waters

**OTHERS PRESENT:** Laureen Barthman-Thompson, DFW  
Steven Chappell, SRCD  
Jesirae Collins, SRCD  
Tim Edmunds, SRCD  
Dan Lehman, Assoc. Director  
Edwin Limanto, DWR  
Phelan McKinney, SRCD  
Kelli Perez, SRCD  
Melissa Riley, DFW  
Orlando Rocha, DFW  
John Takekawa, SRCD  
Jeff Taylor, SRCD  
Larry Wyckoff, DFW

**1. Call to Order** ~ Mr. Waters called the Suisun Resource Conservation District Board of Directors meeting to order at 2:00 PM.

**2. Public Comments** ~ There were no public comments.

**3. Open Session** ~ Mr. Waters opened the May 12, 2021, Board of Directors Meeting and asked for consideration of agenda Item 3a.

a) Approval of the April 14, 2021 Special Meeting Minutes ~ A motion to approve the special meeting minutes from the April 14, 2021 Board special meeting was made by Mr. Lewis and seconded by Mr. Lenk; all were in favor and the motion carried on a roll call vote (Mr. Connolly abstained, he was intermittently participating in the meeting due to internet connectivity issues).

b) Approval of the April 14, 2021 Board Meeting Minutes ~ A motion to approve the minutes from the April 14, 2021 Board meeting was made by Mr. Lenk and seconded by Mr. Lewis; all were in favor and the motion carried on a roll call vote (Mr. Connolly was absent at the April Board Meeting therefore abstained).

**4. Financial Reports** ~

a) Approval of Vendor Claims for April 2021 ~ Mr. Chappell reported that the April 2021 General Fund vendor claims totaled \$116,604.59 including reimbursable claims for the SFB Restoration Authority essential fish screen grant and WRA for the NFWF Salt Marsh Harvest Mouse grant. Mr. Chappell reported the April 2021 Lower Joice Island vendor claims included \$10,231.59 of normal operational expenses including mechanic's service on the equipment. Mr. Chappell also reported the April 2021 Water Managers Program vendor claims total as \$24,438.28 of normal operational expenses. Finally, Mr. Chappell reported a Special Revenue claims total of \$2,764.45 for the portable pump program fuel. Mr. Connolly moved to approve the claims, Mr. Lenk seconded the motion, all were in favor and the motion carried on a roll call vote.

b) 3<sup>rd</sup> Quarter Fiscal Year 2020/2021 Budget Summary Review ~ Mr. Chappell provided the 3<sup>rd</sup> Quarter 2020/2021 budget summary review through 75% of the fiscal year. Lower Joice budgeting is at 70% for salaries and 73% for expenses, so currently on budget. The Water Manager program costs are currently at 75.4% for payroll and 51% of operational expenses. The fish screen maintenance had a -\$14K balance for the budgeted boom truck replacement, and the SFBRA grant reimbursed \$20K with a match of \$11K with a few added expenses including registration. The NFWF Mouse grant had WRA subcontract expenses, and all is reimbursable. Mosquito Abatement is a zero-balanced account, and currently there is a positive balance that came in this fiscal year for 2019 activities. The pest-weed control program had a balance, and those charges are reimbursable grant expenses. The PAI fund cost-share program has a small balance for program administrative fees. DWR Mein's Landing contract has a

positive balance for SRCD staff. The SFBRA essential fish screen grant has been billed and a first reimbursement check has been received. The SRCD General Fund salary expenses are at 74%, while office expenses are at 44%, but the annual audit and county account expenses are not yet included and will post later in the fiscal year.

**5. Department of Fish and Wildlife (DFW) Report** ~ The DFW report was provided by Mr. Orlando Rocha. **Joice Island Pig Hunt:** All the pig hunts are now complete as of last month, and hunters killed 8 pigs with several missed opportunities. Only 2 hunters skipped the hunt during the whole season -- in past years, the no show rate has been much higher. DFW now calls and emails every hunter to make sure they are going to attend, since the hunt is so popular, and there are plenty of people willing to fill the spot if they cannot make it. **Elk:** We have already been receiving calls about our tule elk hunts. The Big Game Hunting Digest is available online and has all the information to apply for not only our elk hunts, but all big game hunts in the state. The deadline to apply is June 2<sup>nd</sup>. We will issue the same number of tags as last year: 33 in total, 7 bulls, 10 spikes, 16 cows. The fundraiser Bull elk tag is a raffle. Surveys have already counted 12 calves on the ground. We expect 30-40 calves to be born this year. **Wildlife Area:** Work has already begun on the Wildlife Area. Phase 2 of a duck stamp project that enhances our ability to get reliable water to Pond 12 is underway, the pump discharge pipe will be replaced under the county road, and water control structures will be upgraded or replaced to keep water where it should be and not flowing random places. The crew has been busy spraying when the wind allows. We have taken a little different approach this year, and if the weather allows for a spray day, the whole crew is spraying with every available piece of spray equipment we have. So far, 5,000 gallons of mixed chemical has been sprayed on Lepidium alone, and the plan is to double that before the Lepidium spray season ends. After the fire in 2019, Lepidium really took hold in the upland field, and we are really trying to knock it back. A lot of this spraying is in preparation for large scale plantings of native grasses and pollinator mixes, so it is critical for us to spray as much as possible this year.

**6. Department of Water Resources Report** ~ Mr. Edwin Limanto provided the DWR Suisun Marsh briefing packet. For the month of April, the salinity standards under the current Deficiency Period for the eastern compliance stations was 11.0 mS/cm and 14.0 mS/cm for the western compliance stations. Progressive Daily Mean Salinities in the Marsh ranged from 4.3 in the east to 11.9 mS/cm in the western Marsh. At the end of April, net Delta outflow was 6,039 cfs. The salinity standards for May were 11.0 mS/cm in the east and 12.5 mS/cm in the west. Salinity values for May 9th were 7.3 to 14.4 mS/cm, while Delta outflow was 4,013 cfs. Progressive Daily Mean (PDM) salinities at the Control Stations exceeded the Drought Response Fund (DRF) trigger at the end of March, so the DRF was triggered for the western marsh (although the fund will not be able to be allocated until the end of May). The PDMs at control stations were above trigger values in February and March but below triggers in April. Under 7.c of the SMPA,

the SMSCGs may be operated in September to improve conditions to meet the October salinity standard. DWR is preparing for this possibility.

Roaring River Distribution System (RRDS) maintenance activities for 2021 are being planned for ditch clearing and dredging at the Hammond Pond intake pond for 2022-2023. Levees are being monitored after extreme high tides. Some routine maintenance has been started including mowing, spraying, grading, and levee repairs that will continue into the fall. Erosion repair was completed between Mile Marker 2.0 and 3.0 under the RGP3 permit.

Morrow Island Distribution System (MIDS) routine maintenance 2021 planning is ongoing. Levee monitoring continues after extreme high tides, and beginning on May 3<sup>rd</sup>, routine maintenance was started the month. Goodyear Slough Outfall (GYSO) coordination continued removing debris at the inlet, planning for 2021 routine maintenance, and fixing the sheet piles around the inlet with improved debris removal in the late summer of 2021. Levees continue to be monitored after extreme high tides. Routine maintenance will start in June or July. The Suisun Marsh Salinity Control Gates (SMSCG) have tidal operations in effect in response to high salinity conditions, and one gate out for refurbishment will be returned in August, while one gate with a faulty gearbox should return to service on May 20<sup>th</sup>. Flashboards will be removed on June 3<sup>rd</sup>.

Reservoir capacity ranged from 37-54% in the northern Sierra and in the southern Sierra 29-90%. Most reservoirs are below historical averages. Precipitation year to date was 48% of normal in the northern Sierra and 49% in the southern Sierra. Discussion ensued.

**7. Continuance of a Public Hearing to June 9, 2021, ~** Mr. Chappell reported that the public hearing would be continued to the next Board meeting. Not all the plans are complete and ready for consideration of approval.

## **8. Suisun Resource Conservation District Reports ~**

- a) 2015 Suisun Marsh Preservation Agreement Update and 2020 PAI Grant Program Update ~ Mr. Chappell reported that the SMPA agreement and grant program continued to be administered. Weekly calls continue with Branch Chief Dean Messer including update on monthly payment of program expenses. Due to drought conditions, the SMPA deficiency standards have been triggered and SMSCG gate operations will continue through May. SRCD has sent DWR a request for payment of the 2021 SMPA Drought Response Program funds (including DFW) which will be allocated after May salinity conditions are known and modeled by DWR. The Programs allocations to properties will be determined based upon the regional extent of salinity for this year and the subsequent year of the drought. SRCD has participated in discussions with DWR to address the bulkhead repair at Goodyear

Slough Outfall. SRCD has requested dredging to be included as part of this maintenance work. SMPA 5-year review effort is continuing with meetings in May.

- b) Suisun Marsh Plan Update ~ There have been no changes with the Suisun Marsh Plan Implementation. There was no solicitation for new 2021 PAI projects, and we are currently updating 2020 PAI projects to extend the agreement length and adjusting any outstanding project issues. There is a SMP Principal's meeting tomorrow with a AMAT meeting next Tuesday, May 18th.
  
- c) USACE Permits -- RGP3 & LOP Permit Update ~ Work continues on the 2021 permit application administration. The April package has been submitted to the USACE. The Letter of Permission for the dredging program applications are due on May 28<sup>th</sup>. The permit expires in March 2023, so a renewal package will need to be started this fall. Discussion ensued.
  
- d) Water Manager Program Update ~ Mr. Takekawa reported on the Water Manager Program. Mr. Taylor processed April USACE RGP3 package, the March package was returned approved on April 13<sup>th</sup>, and he sent out exterior work notifications. Mr. Taylor collected data from Belden's Landing water quality monitoring station and prepared the spring water quality report. In addition, he is continuing to work on editing the 2020 SRCD Annual Report. During April, water managers deployed 6 pumps, and Mr. McKinney completed boom truck work for upcoming screen maintenance. Smelt monitoring continued on April 22 and May 4. The Sea Ark boat had electrical problems on the second survey, but the batteries will be replaced to see if that may solve the problem.

For the Individual Management Plan updates, the Water Managers have completed drafting all the 122 plans; 50 of those drafts are in final revision: 10 final revisions are in review with landowners, 10 are in final edits, and 52 are complete. Ms. Collins obtained a final copy of the 2020 NAIP image which she will use to update the final maps. Our revised goal is for completion by the June Board meeting. Mr. Edmunds worked with our electrical contractor on fish screen 426 and 634. He coordinated spraying of Lepidium at Island Club and Dead Duck Club, and chemical was distributed to 2 other landowners. He also continued work on DPR certification for spray-drone operations.

On April 15<sup>th</sup>, Mr. Chappell and Mr. Takekawa met with State Coastal Conservancy Director Mr. Sam Schuchat and Ms. Taylor Samuelson plan for a SF Bay Restoration Board fieldtrip in Suisun Marsh. The fieldtrip was set for June 11<sup>th</sup>. On April 21<sup>st</sup>, the Spring Landowner Workshop was held, and attendance included >98 participants. Staff provided 5 of the 15 presentations. On April 22<sup>nd</sup>, Mr. Takekawa attended a training class with the County for Excel pivot table analyses. On April 26<sup>th</sup>, Mr. Takekawa hosted a coordination call with County Parks on progress on the

Belden's Landing NFWF project. On May 10<sup>th</sup>, Ms. Collins and Mr. Takekawa followed up with Ranger Diana Samuel to complete maps for new signage at Belden's Landing designating the Water Trail site.

On April 28<sup>th</sup>, Mr. Chappell and Mr. Takekawa attended the first of 3 Suisun Marsh Public Access meetings hosted by the Delta Stewardship Council. Also on April 28<sup>th</sup>, Mr. Chappell, Mr. Taylor, and Mr. Takekawa met with a club to discuss details to implement a carryover 2020 PAI project. On April 29<sup>th</sup>, Mr. McKinney and Mr. Takekawa met with webmaster Charles Fox to implement updates on the SRCDC website. On April 30<sup>th</sup>, Ms. Collins provided maps for the final report of the CDFA grants for Lepidium and Phragmites work.

On May 3<sup>rd</sup>, Mr. Takekawa met with coauthors led by the Delta Stewardship Council to prepare a review paper on invasive species control. On May 4<sup>th</sup>, Mr. Takekawa worked with vendor Tech2U to adjust the new network storage system and include a method for remote access. On May 5<sup>th</sup>, Mr. Chappell, Mr. Edmunds, and Mr. Takekawa attended the annual RD2112 coordination meeting. On May 6<sup>th</sup>, Mr. Takekawa attended a meeting of the Delta Heritage Area board. On May 11<sup>th</sup>, Mr. Chappell and Mr. Takekawa attended a second review of Suisun Marsh vegetation updates with Chico State.

e) Lower Joice Island Update ~ Mr. Takekawa provided the Lower Joice Island update. The gear from the marsh burning conducted in early April was cleaned up and removed from the island. We are still waiting on Mr. Andy Twiss for repairs of an 15hp outboard motor at his shop and 2 of our old ATVs. Mr. Mouton completed mowing of the levee twice in the past month. He completed regular monthly maintenance on the solar system and septic system. He brought in the water pump for repair after it malfunctioned, but it required replacement, so a new pump is now on order. On April 20<sup>th</sup>, I met Dr. Scott Jones from USGS to take soil core samples of the marsh burn area. On the same day, Mr. Kyle Phillips from UC Davis sampled the water to look at zooplankton production. On May 7<sup>th</sup>, Mr. Chappell, Mr. Takekawa, and Mr. Mouton installed plywood blocks over the 4 weirs separating the north and south units to allow for work in the north while keeping the south unit flooded.

f) Summary of Past & Future Meetings, Tours, and Presentations ~ Mr. Chappell indicated we have met all our obligations with meetings while maintaining Covid-19 measures. We had good participation at our Spring Landowner Workshop on April 21<sup>st</sup> with nearly 100 attending, but we would like to continue to recruit more landowner participation. The Board package included a letter to Suisun City for their proposed development south of Hwy 12 off Pennsylvania which had been previously proposed for development including historic wetland photographs of

the site. The SF Bay Restoration Authority Board of Director's fieldtrip in Suisun Marsh is now set for Friday, June 11th. Mr. Waters and Mr. Chappell will participate in the next Delta Conservancy Board meeting. The next SRCD Board meeting may be lengthy with several topics to discuss. Discussion ensued.

**9. Suisun Resource Conservation District Committee Reports ~**

- a) Agency Committee ~ No report.
- b) Legal Committee ~ No report.
- c) Personnel Committee ~ No report.
- d) Finance Committee ~ Mr. Chappell reported that we now have the financial statements on the Suisun Conservation Fund, so there will be a report at the July-August meeting.
- e) Associate Directors Committee ~ No report.

**10. Adjourn** ~ A motion to adjourn the meeting was made by Mr. Lenk and seconded by Mr. Connolly; all were in favor and the motion carried by roll call. The meeting was adjourned at 3:04 PM.